

# Tips for Selecting a Contractor

## Always...

- Call and arrange to interview at least three different contractors to answer your questions and provide you with a detailed bid for the work you want done.
- Ask the contractor how long they have been in business, including their qualifications and proof of an up-to-date insurance certificate to cover any costs that may arise as a result of their work.
- Ask which approved window manufacturer the contractor uses and why.
- Ask the contractor to provide you with three recent references for similar projects they have done including names, addresses, and phone numbers so that you are able to check out the quality and customer satisfaction.
- Check with the Better Business Bureau (414) 847-6000 to see if there is a history of complaints against the contractor: <http://search.bbb.org/>
- Make sure that all financial terms and work to be done are completely understood and clearly stated in writing before signing any contract.
- Be sure that there is an approximate "Start" and "Finish" date in writing that includes the ability for you to "Void" the contract if work is not started or completed in a timely fashion.
- Request a "lien waver" when making your final payment to assure that you will not be held liable for third-party claims for non-payment.

## Never...

- Pay for the full amount of the project before the work begins. Smaller fees or payments for materials already on the job are normal and appropriate.
- Select a contractor just because they gave you the lowest bid.

You may also make a **written request** to the City of Milwaukee Health Department's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program to provide you with contractor performance records for the previous quarter of the year. Write to:

City of Milwaukee Health Department  
Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program  
841 N. Broadway, 1st Floor  
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Adapted from the following sources:  
Better Business Bureau  
National Association of Home Builders  
National Association of Realtors, Inc.



Tom Barrett, Mayor  
Bevan K. Baker,  
Commissioner of Health  
[www.milwaukee.gov/health](http://www.milwaukee.gov/health)